

## Engineering Review Board Meeting Ends With Decision to Continue With Launch Preparations

Written by Larry Nelson

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*Image above: Space shuttle Atlantis is revealed at Kennedy Space Center's Launch Pad 39A following retraction of the pad's Rotating Service Structure. Image credit: NASA/Troy Cryder*

Space Shuttle Atlantis launch preparations continue on schedule despite inclement weather near the launch pad near midday Thursday.

As engineers prepared to move the Rotating Service Structure away from Atlantis, a severe thunderstorm passed overhead, delivering rain and lightning that produced two strikes near the launch pad.

Data review showed the two strikes occurred at 12:31 p.m. and 12:40 p.m. EDT. The first struck

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the water tower 515 feet (157 meters) from the pad and the second struck the beach area northeast of the pad.

So far, the data review indicates no issues with any systems, including shuttle Atlantis, External Tank, Solid Rocket Boosters, Space Shuttle Main Engines or Ground Support Equipment.

Review of the data will occur again during the traditional "Tanking Weather Meeting" scheduled for 1:30 a.m. Friday, which is the point where managers will decide to proceed with fueling Atlantis' tank ahead of launch. Fueling is scheduled to start at 2:01 a.m. Friday leading to launch at 11:26 a.m.